



The Genderless city in Japanese literature

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MODERNISM, by its nature, must always exist as part of a continuous cycle. What is deemed to be modern at one point in time will almost certainly not be so at another, although features of what was once modern may still persist in a new composite, a new present already foreshadowing a new future. Ceaseless change constitutes the essence of modernity, and this coexistence of past, present and future can be seen particularly in modern cityscapes. In Tokyo, for example, modernism is immediately expressed by a sea of high-rise buildings, masses of glittering signs, and the complex web of the city's underground railway system, all expressing at the same time an onrush to the future. But the history of the city persists in many ways, in temples and shrines, the Imperial Palace, the vast cemetery at Aoyama, parts of old streets that escaped the fire-bombing of May 1945, and in sudden unexpected encounters, such as coming across a shrine enclosing a cluster of fifty or sixty stone foxes on a busy avenue in Aoyama, all with red kerchiefs tied around their necks, signifying their divine status as messengers of the gods.

If we look for signs of gender in the structure of the city, surely it is masculine. Unarguably, men have built the city and maintain its infrastructure. Of course, a city without people is no city at all; it is people who give it life, and one of the greatest manifestations of city vitality is the crowd. Yet, collectively, the city crowd of everyday is impersonal, genderless. Friedrich Engels brought out this point forcefully in his description of the people of London in the nineteenth century:

Hundreds of thousands of people of all classes and ranks of society jostle past one another; are they not all human beings with the same characteristics and potentialities, equally interested in the pursuit of





happiness?... And yet they rush past one another as if they had nothing in common or were in no way associated with one another. Their only agreement is a tacit one: that everyone should keep to the right of the pavement, so as not to impede the stream of people moving in the opposite direction. No one even bothers to spare a glance for the others. The greater the number of people that are packed into a tiny space, the more repulsive and offensive becomes the brutal indifference, the unfeeling concentration of each person on his private affairs.'

Acerbic though it might be, Engels' description holds true to this growing aspect of city life today where gender as such is obliterated. As we move about in city crowds, places such as streets or arcades often lose the immediacy of their identity and dissolve into non-places on the edge of our consciousness as we occupy ourselves with our own thoughts and purposes. And even in places of leisure such as parks and restaurants, or in the host of shops which a city provides, neither sex can be said to predominate.

This psychological impact, isolating the individual, does not deny in any way the fact that cities each have their own identities, each distinct from the other, and that in cities there are many spaces where social expression of all kinds can take place: festivals, human rights demonstrations, sporting gatherings, religious celebrations, memorial services of national significance, demonstrations of state power. But, for all of that, it is the impersonality, even indifference, of daily life in a modern city that is emerging as an ever-developing feature.

The passages from Japanese literature selected here all express images of evanescence and solitude, in some cases of city surroundings barely existing on the periphery of human consciousness, in other cases the reverse, where individual identity becomes lost in the vast parameters of a modern metropolis. In yet other passages, everyday experience dissolves into transcendental visions where the city and its citizens are framed against infinity. "Unreal City": so wrote T. S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*. Using either realism or modernist techniques, the Japanese novelists and poets I have chosen depict images of an archetypal city where reality and surreality blend.

A good illustration of this point is the following surrealist prose poem





by Hiraide Takashi (b. 1950), which has two themes: the individual being subsumed into the vast infrastructure of the city, and secondly, the creative power of the earth underlying the city:

Then I noticed that a rail track rusted green was projecting from my chest and had descended on the asphalt in front of my eyes. When I knelt down to meet its arrival it stretched out even faster and was sucked into the stairs and down to the underground of a pale black stone building in front of me, which looked as if it were secretly embracing the rail in its belly. Crawling and retrieving the track back into my chest, I finally arrived at its entrance and peeped inside. Far beyond in an empty hole that was structured by bones at the place where two lights crossed, there was a dull shade. And sometime later a roaring sound began to come.²

In Hiraide's city poems, the impersonality that is a feature of any metropolis, and the isolation that it brings can always be found. Here, the poet himself becomes fused into the city's superstructure, so artificial that it is quite at odds with the fruitful and menacing earth beneath. The ordinary has become the extraordinary in this case, what we chose to call reality giving way to surreality immediately after the poet had noticed "a rail rusted green". Hiraide's poetry as a whole lies in this direction; he sees his work as "a piercing of reality"³. Thus, we find him expressing his vision of office workers at the end of yet another mundane day as "an army of determined snails devoutly descending the emergency stairs of a high rise building in a trail, like the breathing of a sleeper" (Hiraide 1990:32). And in a comical poem that expands into metaphysics, he spies a snail on the escalator of a big department store. (1990:51) "Where are you going, my dear snail?", he muses. But man and snail are shut away from each other in their separate worlds, unable to communicate. The image can equally apply to all the human beings on all the floors, lifts and escalators of the department store, so close and yet so distant from one another. This little poem is highly expressive of the meaninglessness and mystery of life itself.

In another prose poem, Hiraide catches the emotions and reactions of a person on a city train. In expressing privacy, psychological isolation and unawareness of city surroundings, it must surely stand as an image common to all city dwellers:





I am in a train on the way to see a dying person. The wind is blowing through the carriage and the spot of sun on the blue seat never moves. I exchange glances with other passengers as if it were a game. I stand up, take my leave and walk with the wind toward the end of the carriage. Oh, I am forgetting what direction is forward. The capital city freshly green spreads itself out through the end windows. The end of windows. Will I return from the hospital with a smile on my face? (1990:43)

This poem is very effective in expressing a state of mind bordering on anxiety. The wind blowing in the train, the exchange of glances, the speaker's confused sense of direction, greenery flashing by outside the train, and the elliptical sentence "the end of windows" signalling the approach of a crisis – all have an unsettling effect, all are fragments contributing to express a psychological state of foreboding, crowned by the final sentence and its question. In the consciousness of the person on the train, awareness of the city has been reduced to green anonymity. Unwittingly, the poem is a perfect image of Engels' insistence of "the concentration of each person on his private affairs" to the degree that "Oh, I am forgetting what direction is forward".

Adding a further perspective to these images are the observations of the French anthropologist Marc Augé, who in his book *Non Places*⁴ argues that what he calls supermodernity has led to the spread of non-places in cities – for example, airport terminals, supermarkets, city tunnels, freeways – resulting in the increasing solitude of the individual. In his strongly argued book, Augé contends that:

non-places are the real measure of our time, one that could be quantified by totalling together all the air, rail and motorway routes, the mobile cabins called means of transport (aircraft, trains and road vehicles), the airports and railway stations, leisure parks, large retail outlets, and finally the complex skein of cable and wireless networks that mobilize extraterrestrial space for the purposes of communication so peculiar that it often puts the individual in contact only with another image of himself. (79)

In *The Ruined Map*⁵, a detective story written in the 1960s, Abe Kôbô (1924-1993) remarkably anticipates the ideas of Marc Augé by demonstrating in creative fiction the way in which non-places begin to encroach on the consciousness of people to the point of "cocooning" them,





of overwhelming them. Before discussing passages from the novel, let Augé summarise what he means by a non-place. If, as he argues, “a place can be defined as relational or historical or concerned with identity, then a space that cannot be defined as relational or historical or concerned with identity is a non-place.” (Augé 77) Certainly, our daily experience of modern city life and Augé’s examples bear out his definition of a non-place, where a multiplicity of city aspects impact on the consciousness of everybody, blurring our awareness of our surroundings to which we do not even attempt to relate. Impersonality is the chief characteristic of non-places: electronic machines serve us, guide us, inform us, control us. Magnetic cards establish our identity. In his exposition of supermodernity, Augé has concluded that “it is no longer possible in any analysis of individuals to ignore the spaces through which they are in transit.” (120)

In *The Ruined Map*, a private detective is engaged by a woman to find her missing husband. We might expect from this that the plot would revolve around his search. To a degree it does, but it is the vast anonymous city striking at the consciousness of the detective, obtruding and occupying his attention, that dominates the novel. In the end he loses all sense of identity and place. The city has absorbed him. He has become lost, a missing person himself, “relying on a map I no longer comprehend”. (299)

The novel begins with a detailed description of the surface of a near-empty city street along which the detective is driving. The surface, he notes, is made of “rough-textured concrete with narrow grooves five inches apart, now covered with dust and tyre shavings”.⁽⁵⁾ The first page is filled with speculations and observations by the detective about the surface of the street. It occupies his attention fully as he drives, leaving its bleak imprint. Then, as he nears the apartment blocks where his client lives, he is confronted by a large signboard:

UNAUTHORIZED VEHICLES FORBIDDEN
WITHIN THESE PRECINCTS (6)

Insignificant in themselves, the street and the sign are indicative of the intrusive banality which makes up a large component of everyday life in modern cities. As Marc Augé has pointed out, a sign is an archetypal signifier of a non-place in which non-human interaction takes place. To live





in a city is to be assailed by signs. Here, the authoritative sign prohibits entry. The detective must make a choice: to comply with the direction or to ignore it. He drives past the sign, entering, for him, a new non-place of domestic bleakness, emphasizing the separateness and solitude of its occupants:

It was as if I were looking at some patterned infinity: the four-storied buildings, identical in height, each floor with six doors, were lined up in rows of six to the right and left. Only the fronts of the buildings, facing the road, were painted white, and the colour stood out against the darkish green of the sides, emphasizing even more the geometric pattern of the view. With the roadway as an axis, the housing development extended in two great wings, somewhat greater in width than in depth. Perhaps it was for the lighting, but as the buildings were laid out in staggered lines, on both sides one's view met only white walls supporting a milk-white dome of sky.⁷

To meet his client, whose name is Mrs Nemuro, the investigator enters one of the buildings which he describes as “a human filing cabinet with filing card apartments”, and to identify himself he presents his card when Mrs Nemuro opens the door. In what is a demanding novel, the tone quickly thickens into surreality and ambivalence. Mrs Nemuro seems to fuse into the utilitarian background of her apartment (which again is described in meticulous detail, befitting a detective). When he looks out the window he sees orderly emptiness below and the sharp edge of the next building cutting away the sky. What is for Mrs Nemuro a place with personal significance and identity – her unit is number 12 East 3, East standing for the right side of the street, 3 for the third building from the front, and 12 for the second floor apartment facing the landing at the left end – is for the detective a non-place, one of thousands with no history or identity. As for clues, the only clue he ever obtains is a café matchbox left in the missing man's raincoat, and it is only later that he realizes that there are two kinds of matches in it: one with white heads, the other black. He never advances beyond this point. Ambivalence and uncertainty beset him at every point and to the end, the case remains unsolved.

We have seen how, in driving along a city street to meet Mrs Nemuro, the surface of the road grinds into the detective's consciousness, blurring his awareness so that only the road remains. This scene is written





realistically and can still be conceived within a framework of space and time, but when later the detective is driving on a freeway, his surroundings and the immediacy of his thoughts dissolve altogether. Space has vanished into time:

The dry pavement of the freeway seemed both black and white...The motor sputtered, making a sound like a piece of wire thrust into the blades of a fan; the tyres screeched like adhesive tape being torn away. I was immersed to my very core in noise, but I heard nothing; it was as if I were in a great silence. All I could see was the concrete road running straight to the sky. No, it was not a road, it was a band of flowing time. I was not seeing but only feeling time. (174)

Unable to solve the case, the detective resigns. The façade of the city presses in on him: coffee houses, arcades, pachinko parlours, street stalls, bars, vending machines, neon lights. His identity begins to disintegrate. He comments to himself: "When you think about it, the men walking about here so feverishly are like temporary missing persons. The difference being a few hours or a lifetime." (225) And as he leaves a bar to become lost in the cacophony of the city, we find him noting that "my own senses, fusing with the darkness, began to scatter." (235)

The novel reaches its climax in the detective's hallucinatory visions of the city. Here, the dislocation between space and time, which the detective experienced on the freeway, is reversed. Time is now lost in space. In what is a Dali-esque depiction of a city, the detective finds himself alone in the silence and emptiness of an abandoned city where time has been erased:

I was overcome by an unspeakable terror. It was as if I were trapped in a landscape where the painter had forgotten to put in the people. And since there were no people, naturally no cars were to be seen. All the same there were signs of living beings over there. For instance, the smoking butt of a cigarette lay by the edge of the pavement. From the length of the ash, it gave the impression of having been tossed away a few seconds before.... Apparently, people and cars had vanished but an instant before. (278-9)

In panic, he dashes into a coffee house where, looking back through a curtain, he sees to his relief "people coming and going in the street and a solid stream of cars". (280) From this sudden experience of dislocation, his





downfall is inevitable. He becomes a missing person himself. He identifies with the missing husband. "I thought I was following his steps but I have been following my own." (247)

In this novel of psychological disintegration, the city is the central locus, binding everything together. Written after Franz Kafka's prophetic works and before Marc Augé's anthropological study of non-places, *The Ruined Map* is a brilliant exposition of how individuality can be enveloped and constrained in a modern metropolis. And today, the pace of electronic development has intensified this encroachment still further. The impersonal – the banal – governs gaps of our conscious time each day, emphasizing solitude. Hardly noticing, we engage in subtle transactions with machines, submitting to the machine's instructions: to obtain cash or ticketing of all kinds, to be entertained, or to be informed in a lift of building floors (in the Brennan building at Sydney University accompanied further by a gong!). Television provides reality programs. The internet is an electronic universe. In all forms of transport we become strangers in the midst of strangers. Marc Augé's research and conclusion have the stamp of conviction. The primary pattern emerging from it all is one of impersonality and solitude. This does not deny, of course, the individuality of cities or the pleasure that citizens can take in living there, but what it does point to is an encroachment in our awareness of the city through the proliferation of non-places and the absorption of conscious time.

The surrealist poetry of Takanayagi Makoto (b. 1950) relating to the modern city goes far beyond the surrealism we find in *The Ruined Map*. His early poems consist of cycles or sequences written in block prose form. They centre largely on a single theme: the illusory nature of our perceptions. In built-up sequences he creates imaginary places – *Alice Land*⁶ or *Portrait of a City*, for example. In these poems, reversals abound and certainty dissolves into uncertainty. For Takanayagi, the reality we have fashioned for ourselves is an illusion. Equally illusory is the conception of reality existing beyond our knowing. Underpinning all his work in this first phase is that mu (nothingness) is the only reality. His poems are metaphysical statements, a demonstration of the Sartrean existentialist





dictum that “non-being is a perpetual presence in us and outside of us, that nothingness haunts being”^s. Take, for example, the amusement park in his surrealist cycle, *Portrait of a City*:

From the amusement park you can hear the cheering voices of children in fragments riding on the wind, day and night. These voices are so utterly joyful, innocent and pure that they cannot be considered part of this world.

That’s right. The place is the kingdom of the dead, the kingdom of the dead who died young – the underground kingdom where they continue to live with their features and voices intact as in the time of their lives. Everyone knows very well of its existence as if it were their own, but nobody wants to recognize its existence.

Only children dream of such an amusement park, while instinctively feeling both great attraction and fear. Young and helpless children who know that in their moment of death they will die in rapture with serene faces. At times they even laugh voicelessly as if they dream of their features as they play in the amusement park.

The voices of children who have newly arrived at the amusement park are riding high in the wind. Hearing these voices, children who should be invited to the amusement park next will know the time of their approaching death. (1988:14-5)

Takanayagi’s *Portrait of a City*, with its many aspects, is a place of fantastic ruins. It is unreal in the ordinary meaning of the word, so that in this poem the amusement park is simply the starting point for reflecting on human transience and the presence of death in the midst of pure joy. In this poem, an identifiable area – an amusement park in which children are playing – dissolves in the eternal mystery of death pregnant in life, of cycles of regeneration. The happy eager laughter of children in the wind, which we have all known, keeps expanding until it has lost all immediacy. Surrealism has intervened, replacing the reality of ordinary experience. The joy of children laughing heralds impending death; the park becomes “a kingdom of the dead”, a locus of inevitable fate. The poem is conceived on two planes: a cheerful park and, underpinning it, the transience of the place and the dissolution of time into timelessness. Present and future coalesce, so that the park ceases to be an identifiable





place and is transformed into a surreal “underground kingdom” beyond our knowing.

Transcendentalism may seem a lofty vantage point from which to discuss the presence or absence of gender in a modern city, but the mystery of existence, the interpenetration of the known and the unknown, of time and timelessness, are preconditions of what we choose to call reality: and it is within this huge intangible framework that Takanayagi has conceived his *Portrait of a City*. In this cycle of prose poems he creates an ethereal metropolis that is both recognizable and beyond recognition. Here, we find, for example, a museum “so full that there is no room to place even one step inside” (1988:22); a film theatre containing swirling mist-like images from the past that the audience can no longer remember (1988:32); or an empty, spider-infested hotel facing a canal (1988:40-1). All the characteristics of these nihilistic visions – of which I have mentioned only a few from this prose cycle – come together in Takanayagi’s description of a subway station where passengers commence a journey taking them into the depths of the earth:

There is a station on the outskirts of the north of this city. The surrounding area of the station is bleak and there are no people around. Of course there are no shops and not even houses can be found. Truly it looks like an abandoned mine pit. Here and there empty holes like the entry of disused mine pits are gaping. When you go down the stairs, which are like a mine shaft where wet air with the smell of iron blows up to you, a needlessly large pitch-dark platform spreads out. That’s right, you have entered a subway station. That is to say, you have not come to ‘an underground railway’ but ‘a railway heading into the depths of the earth’.

The carriages are similar to trolleys. Passengers sitting correctly side by side close the lid over their head and start their journey deep into the earth while keeping their eyes shut. Of course, no travellers return. How could anyone want to return to the surface when they are driven by a passion to understand the origin of their souls? It may be that these people’s souls are so numerous that, wherever you dig in the city, only black and hard soil emerges. (1988:70-1)

Our final example of a genderless city depicted in Japanese literature comes from the Nobel Prize winning novelist, Ōe Kenzaburō. Ōe’s early novel, *A Personal Matter*, is an account of the anguished reactions of a





young father whose son was born with a grotesque lump on his head – external brain damage. In the end, after harrowing scenes, the father, whose name is Bird, decides on his son's death and knows of a doctor who will do this illegal operation. Bird and a young woman named Himiko drive in blinding rain with the baby through a maze of streets towards the doctor's clinic. The drive becomes a nightmare:

They had driven up and down hills, crossed a winding, muddy river any number of times, blundered down blind alleys, emerged again and again on the wrong side of one of the steep slopes that rose out of the valley to the north and south. Himiko remembered having once driven right to the entrance of the clinic, and when the car climbed to the top of a rise she was even able to locate its general vicinity. But then they would descend into the crowded hollow and it would become impossible to say with certainty even which direction they were heading. When they finally turned into a street Himiko thought she remembered, it was only to encounter a small truck which refused absolutely to yield the way. They had to back up a hundred yards, and when they had let the truck pass and tried to go back, they found they had turned a different corner. The street at the next turn was one way: return was impossible. (153-4)

Their fruitless drive covers pages, a physical symbol of anguish, anxiety and frustration, blocking them in the enormity of wanting to kill the baby. Here, city streets function as images of psychological states. For Bird and Himiko the streets are just anonymous passageways, a means of getting to the clinic. In the vast city, the streets have no individuality beyond serving that purpose. To the two people in the car, they are non-places.

The distinction between place and non-place is of course quite fluid. For those who live in a street or are familiar with it, the street will be a distinct place. For those like Bird and Himiko, driving through it only once, it is a non-place. What it becomes then, is a blurred fragment of consciousness, similar to the greenery of the city glimpsed through a train window in Hiraide's poem. It is also interesting that aspects of a city often function in literature as points of emotional crisis. Bird's endless driving through the streets of Tokyo is one example, Hiraide's depiction of foreboding, as the train brings the passenger closer and closer to the hospital, is another. These two examples are small illustrations of Mikhail Bakhtin's original





observation on Dostoevsky's creative method, that is, how Dostoevsky concentrates action at moments of crisis "on the threshold (in doorways, entrance ways, on staircases, in corridors, and so forth), where the crisis or the turning point occur, or in the public square".¹⁰ In the two passages quoted, the confinement of the car and the speed of the train act as images reinforcing an atmosphere of impending crisis.

What stands out in several of the passages I have quoted is their decentred visions of the city, going beyond the reality of sensory experience and yet, in their surrealist imagery, evoking themes that relate directly to daily city life. Aesthetically, these effects are achieved by yoking together contrasting elements. Take, for example, the first sentence in a poem by Hiraide that I have quoted: "Then I noticed a rail track was rusted green and was projecting from my chest and had descended into the asphalt under my feet." The sentence moves without pause from the rational to the irrational, creating a startling effect that gives the poem its force. It is an image of the power of absorption, complete in itself. And while the surreal is the dominating element of expression, the theme of isolation in a vast city is vividly brought out.

In an epigraph to *The Ruined Map*, Abe Kôbô makes a similar leap, where the known becomes immediately subsumed in ambivalence:

The CITY – a bounded infinity. A labyrinth where you are never lost. Your private map where every block bears exactly the same number. Even if you lose your way you cannot go wrong.

As we have seen in Abe's novel, the particular is transformed into an abstraction: a road turns into "a band of flowing time" or, on the other hand, time is truncated and the detective finds himself a solitary figure in a lifeless city. Takayanagi also begins with a particular place and situation as a point of departure for his metaphysical imagery and explorations. Thus, the joyful voices of children in an amusement park herald impending death, and train travellers "sitting correctly side by side start their journey deep into the earth...driven by a passion to understand the origins of their souls". In Takanayagi's poetry, substance is illusory, the city melts into nothingness, each instant of actuality dissolves into infinity. Transience and mutability are his themes. The city exists as a sub-text for this primary





focus, but even so his transcendental view of the city still holds. The concept of modernism itself posits ceaseless change.

Hiraide, Abe and Takayanagi adopt different standpoints and styles in their surrealist perspectives of the city, but the impersonality of cities and the isolation of the individual emerge in the work of all three with different degrees of intensity. These are precisely the themes taken up by Marc Augé in his analysis of how non-places can encroach on human consciousness in modern cities. Augé argues with cogency that there is now a direct relationship between non-places and our diminishing consciousness of them, and that “some experience of non-places is now an essential component of social existence”. (119) In all their variety, these daily experiences in a modern city are characterised by anonymity, conformity and solitude. Far from expressing gender in any form, modern cities project homogeneity. High-rise buildings and apartment blocks proliferate everywhere, helping to create a socially efficient uniformity. Each day in everyday life, huge numbers of city dwellers move from one to the other. While in transit, passengers are solitary in the midst of anonymous crowds. Signs constantly intrude on our consciousness. Accelerated developments in electronics play a major role in communication and entertainment. The result of all this is a constant pressing in on oneself. The distinctive features of a city – its cathedrals, historic buildings, galleries, parks, monuments – are swamped by the mundane. Utilitarianism has, out of necessity, taken over. Few modern buildings could be regarded as monuments (exceptions exist of course, such as the Sydney Opera House). But the modern city is based on a consumer culture designed to meet the needs of large groups. It follows that the individual has become, in effect, a social unit.

The passages I have cited depict the “downside” of modernism in cities today, particularly its power to alienate the individual. Thus Hiraide describes office workers leaving a building as “an army of determined snails” and the rhythm of their coming and going is likened to “the breathing of a sleeper”. Abe Kôbô’s meticulous description of apartment blocks captures perfectly the emptiness and uniformity that city dwellers experience in being “filed away in filing cabinets.” These images depict the actuality of the present and foreshadow the future. Takayanagi’s





transcendental Portrait of a City casts representation to one side, but even here, we find bleak fragments such as “railway stairs like a mine shaft” or railway carriages “like trolleys where passengers sit correctly side by side”.

In any city, the historical past can still be found, but the historical past is ever-diminishing as compared with the ever-accelerating present. Modernism in cities is necessarily the result of social and political initiatives. Here, neither Nietzsche’s “active forgetting” of history nor Walter Benjamin’s celebration of tradition provide fully satisfying theories of modernism when related to cities.¹ On the one hand, history still has a place; on the other, population growth and the onrush of “supermodernity” are eclipsing the position in society that tradition once held. Continual transition, which is at the heart of any concept of modernism, is expressed in cities today in terms of commodification or social utility, but an undeniable outcome of this form of modernism is that it contributes to the isolation of those it is meant to serve.

Notes

- 1 Quoted in *Illuminations*, Walter Benjamin: *Essays and Reflections*, ed. and with an Introduction by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 167.
- 2 Hiraide Takashi, *Hiraide Takashi shishū*, Gendaishi bunko (Tokyo: Shichōsha, 1990), pp. 44-5. Unless otherwise stated all translations are mine.
- 3 Hiraide Takashi, “Tatakai to shite no shi keishiki” (Forms of Poetry as Battle) in *Kōgeki no kissaki* (The Sharp Point of Attack), (Tokyo: Ozawa Shoten, 1985), p. 25.
- 4 Marc Augé, *Non-Places: introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London, New York: Verso, 1995).
- 5 Abe Kōbō, *The Ruined Map*, trans. E. Dale Saunders, (New York: A Perigee Books, 1980).
- 6 Takayanagi Makoto, *Arisurando* (Alice Land), (Tokyo: Chūseikisha, 1980).
- 7 Takayanagi Makoto, *Toshi no shōzō* (Portrait of a City), (Tokyo: Shoshi Yamada, 1988).
- 8 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Basic Writings*, ed. Stephen Priest (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 147.
- 9 Ōe Kenzaburō, *A Personal Matter*, trans. By John Nathan (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1982).
- 10 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, ed. and trans. By Caryl Emerson, Introduction by Wayne C. Booth (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 149.
- 11 For a discussion of Nietzsche’s and Benjamin’s opposed views relating to modernism see Terry Eagleton’s “Capitalism, modernism and postmodernism” in David Lodge (ed), *Modern Criticism and Theory* (London and New York: Longman, 1988), p. 385.

